The River of Youth

From all the golden hills of Dream,
Dew-cool and rainbow kissed,
It twines and curls, a silver stream,
Through valleys hung with mist.

Down past enchanted woods to where
Romance walks ever young,
Where kings ride forth to take the air
On steeds with velvet hung—

Where secret stairways tempt the bold,
Where pirate caves abound,
And many a chest of Spanish gold
May solemnly be found!

Through magic years it twines and creeps
Past towers of peacock blue,
Where still some captured princess sleeps
And dreams come always true.

Then gleam by gleam the light goes out,
Then darkened, grief by grief,
It sighs into our Sea of Doubt
And manhood's unbelief!

—Arthur Stringer.

FAINT HEART NE'ER WON

BY PAUL BLAKE

"'Faint heart ne'er won fair lady,' some fellow said; I'm going to ask the Doctor." Thus the youth, a bright-faced, curly-headed lad not out of his 'teens, throwing his head back like the thoroughbred he was.

"My goodness," gasped the girl, "he'll flay you alive!"

"Not until he subdues that fit of gout," replied the youth, his eyes dancing. "If I'd make one pass toward his bad leg he'd holler like a hoon."

The girl laughed in spite of herself, then looked grave again.

It might be said in passing that this was what the twain called "The Ways and Means Committee" in full session. You see it was this why: The lad and the girl with all the ardor and folly of youth desired only one thing—each other. They talked by day and dreamed by night of a love-lit cottage where they could remain always hand in hand encompassed by all the joys of love. They were a likely pair too, high-bred, well assorted, full of life and vigor and hope and courage.

But, alas, there was the inevitable stern parent—in this case the uncle and guardian of the girl, Dr. Kirk. The doctor had long ago deserted the scalpel and the pill-box for the worship of the golden calf. And it was with eastern devotion that he bowed before this shrine. So it may be imagined that the doctor did not view with even passing favor suits for the hand of his fair niece whose estate of a hundred thousand and odd dollars remained under his administration during her maidenhood. And Ethel was only 17. And she and Archie simply could not wait four years.

So it was that the Ways and Means Committee sat in frequent session. And so they sat this bright spring afternoon in the summer house.

"You know, Archie," said the girl, "that the doctor will never consent to my marriage until I am 21. He likes to handle the money too well."

"Give him the old money," replied Archie, savagely. "I've told you a hundred times. I have got some coming and I reckon mother would be decent about it. If not, by George I can make enough to live on. Frank Smith will give me a place in the bank."

"No, I will not marry without uncle's consent," replied Ethel decisively. "Nor will I let him have my money. We must wait."

"Not by a jugfull," replied Archie violently. "We'll outwit the old Tartar. Trust me. I'm going in now to ask him."

The boy dropped into a brown study for some minutes. Then dropping the girl's hand he leaped to his feet with a cry.

"Hurrah," he cried. "I've got it. He shall ask me to marry you."

"Shall I ring for a keeper?" responded the girl. "Or have you only been drinking?"

"Look here," replied Archie. "Aint the doctor shining around mother all the time? Hasn't he got his greedy eyes on ma's quarter of a million? Well, I guess."

"My goodness, he'll flay you alive!"

"Why, you know she wouldn't have him," replied the girl.

"I don't know any such thing," replied Archie with mock gravity. "I don't know anything about it. What right has a mere man to attempt to read a woman's heart. In fact, now that I think of it, I know she has the highest respect for him—one of the oldest families and all that sort of thing. And, by jove, I suspect she has a tender feeling. 'Pon my word, I do. Just come and watch my smoke."

"But—"

"No buts now," he broke in. "I must get it off my mind or I'll bust." He marched bravely into the house followed by Ethel and a storm of protest.

"Dr. Kirk," he said solemnly, after he had invaded that worthy's library and seated himself under the questioning hostility of the shaggy brows. "I have observed for a long time your attentions to my mother."

The doctor grew purple but the boy went on unconcernedly: "And I will say frankly I have observed it with pleasure for I always respected and esteemed you sir."

"Faint heart ne'er won fair lady, sir."

The doctor softened a trifle, and interjected

"Well sir."

This abrupt interjection nearly floored the young man, but he never flinched.

"Well sir, he replied. "There is a circumstance which I thought you should know before the affair goes any further. According to the terms of my father's will, if my mother marries before I am of age, or am married myself, the entire property, her share as well as my own reverts to me."

"What?" exclaimed the doctor. "Is that so?"

"Yes, sir," replied Archie. "And I thought you should know it. "Not that I want to throw a straw in your way. Quite the reverse, I assure you. But as I am the only man of the family and as these property matters should always be understood between gentlemen I thought it only right to speak to you."

"Quite right, quite right," remarked the doctor, ruminating, "of course there has been no formal—what shall I say—understanding between your mother and myself. How old are you my boy?"

"Nineteen," replied Archie. "I am very sorry to have been compelled to say this, not only on your account, but on mother's. I am not, of course, her confidant in such matters but I am aware she respects you highly and—and I was afraid—well I thought it better to set things right now."

"You young rascal," roared the doctor, smirking and poking Archie with his cane. "You see too much. You don't mean to say your mother is becoming interested in me."

"I fear so, sir," replied Archie gravely.

The doctor swelled up like a huge turkey cock and chuckled:

"Lookee here," he said, turning suddenly on Archie, "You've been shining about my Ethel ever since I can remember. Why don't you bring things to a head. Great Scott, young man, when I was young we used to marry early and get a good start."

"I'm afraid she wouldn't have me," replied the conspirator shamelessly.

"Tush, tush," rejoined the doctor. "Faint heart ne'er won fair lady, sir. I'll bet she'd jump at the chance. You've got a pretty fortune coming and you're a well-favored young buck."

"I feared also that you would oppose her marriage so young," remarked Archie meekly.

"Not at all, not at all," replied the doctor. "Ridiculous, this talk against youthful marriages. It's the time to marry."

"And may I go to her with your permission sir," asked Archie eagerly.

"Certainly, certainly," was the reply. "Good luck to you. Don't take no for an answer.

Within the hour Archie led the blushing and still unbelieving Ethel into the dreaded lion's den and they knelt to receive the blessing of her guardian who was as fervent on his part as Archie was on his.

Neither did the doctor oppose an early wedding. Nay he favored an even urged it, greatly to the surprise of Ethel to whom her betrothed refused to reveal the method by which he had won over the doctor.

They were married within the month and it was the following day when the doctor met his Waterloo. He went all girdled for his victory.

"How in the world did Archie ever gain your consent to marry your neice so young," asked the widow. "I was not really in favor of it but Archie is so dominant—like his father."

Then the doctor determined to make the bold strike.

"He told me, my dear, dear, madam," said he, bowing low, "that you could not marry before him—without sacrificing your fortune, and madam like him I was impatient."

"The scamp," cried the widow. "He told only a half truth. I cannot marry at all without sacrificing my fortune to him."

Just how the doctor got out of the house or what he said, nobody excepting the widow knows, the doctor least of all.

WOES OF THE INFANT ACROBAT

T. P. O'Connor Rejoices That They Are Going Out of Fashion.

"Is there anything more heartrending to contemplate than the wrenched up smile of the infant acrobat when he—often, alas! a she—is suddenly deposited on his staggering little legs by the footlights, after having been spun round like a tambourine by the feet for an inverted elder?" asks T. P. O'Connor.

"I know for a fact that acrobats are kindness itself to their children, and that to their health they pay the nicest care. Without such care the little chaps could never go through their tricks. But, while believing the life of the infant acrobat to be free from home hardships, I still cannot help noticing the effort with which the youngster, under the conditions mentioned, pumps up his sadly unmirthful grin, and I rejoice to find, as must many another person rejoice with me, that baby acrobats are going surely and steadily out of fashion.

"It is amazing that there should be so many people in the world as there are who can express frank delight at the spectacle of a child of tender years being spun on high by resined feet until he is giddy and breathless, and I recall with a comforting sense of satisfaction the anger displayed once by a gentleman in the audience of a variety theater on such a 'turn'—a turn, indeed—receiving an encore from a black whiskered foreigner, possibly the acrobat's agent, sitting in the row in front of him. The former leaned over to the heartless, or thoughtless, alien with the Tigg Montague whiskers and poured such a thunderous torrent of abuse into his astonished ear that I thought there would have been a fearful fight. In this event I know whose part I would have preferred taking!"

Modern Passion for Display.

It was a century and a half ago that Benjamin Ffanklin wrote that "idleness and pride tax with a heavier hand than kings and parliaments," but his message comes with peculiar force to the people of this day and generation. Perhaps idleness is no greater a vice than in Franklin's time, but the sort of pride that taxes men's pocketbooks never before flourished as now. The desire of the poor to ape the rich, the universal effort and determination to keep up appearance for appearance sake, is one of the curses of this age. That hollow appearances are but tokens of superficial minds too few understand. Men and women of moderate means aspire to make the same display in spending money that their more wealthy neighbors do, and, when adversity comes, finding themselves with no money saved they realize too late, as Franklin would say, that they have paid too dearly for the whistle. —Portland Oregonian.

Distrust.

It may be my intelligence ain't what it ought to be,
But somehow human nature's most mysterious to me.
It's got me fooled completely, when I see a solemn man
Rise up to advocate some glorious philanthropic plan
And then find out he had extensive interests at stake
An' that he's figured all the time on profits he might make.
It gets me downright nervous; it is hard to keep serene,
A-listenin' to what people say an' guessin what they mean.

It's hard to disregard the words whose steady rhythmic flow
Stirs up your inmost feelings, jes' like music sweet an' slow;
But I'm gettin' so suspicious that I merely sit an' try
To size the talker up an' catch a twinkle in his eye.
I note the kind of clothes he wears, and if they're brushed with care;
The way he trims his whiskers and the way he cuts his hair.
I've had hard work, but 'bout the toughest task I've ever seen,
Is listenin' to what people say an' guessin' what they mean.

—Washington Star.

The Lawyer's Daughter.

"I am a lawyer's daughter, you know, George, dear," she said, after George had proposed and had been accepted "and you wouldn't think it strange if I were to ask you to sign a little paper to the effect that we are engaged, would you?" George was too happy to think anything strange just then, and he signed the paper with a trembling hand and a bursting heart. Then she laid her ear upon his manly bosom, and they were very, very happy. "Tell me, darling," said George, after a long, delicious silence, "why did you want me to sign that paper? Do you not place implicit confidence in my love for you?" "Ah; yes," she sighed, with infinite content. "Indeed I do George, dear, I have been deceived so many times, you know."

LAFITTE of LOUISIANA

BY MARY DEVEREUX

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY DON C. WILSON

CHAPTER IV.

Toulon, on the Mediterranean, was at this time the great military depot of France. Its inhabitants numbered about twenty-five thousand; and more than fifty frigates and ships of the line rode at anchor in its harbor, while within its spacious magazines was collected an immense quantity of military and naval stores.

Scarcely a day passed during the fall and early winter of 1793 that did not bring to the city families and individuals from all parts of France, seeking protection from the Revolutionists' cruelties—outrages which the Committee were either unable to control, or to which they were indifferent.

At Toulon, the friends of the old monarchy argued among themselves that the violence with which their land had been filled was too terrible to be longer endured; and they began to discuss the idea of surrendering the city, its magazines, forts and ships, to the combined English and Spanish fleets lying outside its harbor, and thus help to bring about a return of law and reason to insane France.

Among those in Toulon who heard of the proposed surrender was Margot, who, with Jean and Pierre, safe under the humble roof of their new home, had for these many months enjoyed a security she had never before known. In a measure her own mistress, and removed from the dread of Etienne, she found reliance and peace in the kindly guidance of Pere Huot, to whom the boys went each day for instruction, his abode being some distance from Margot's small house, which was in a retired part of the city, near the suburbs.

A surrender suggested to her the possibility of bringing scenes of bloodshed and violence; and the very name of "English" was to her—as also to most of her compatriots—the synonym of what was utterly detestable.

Her fears were realized when the surrender was accomplished, and the English ships sailed triumphantly into port, landing five thousand of their own troops and eight thousand Spaniards.

This proceeding was regarded with the greatest alarm and indignation by the Revolutionists, who, considering the surrender an act of treachery, resolved to retake Toulon, and drive the allies from the soil of France. Two armies were marched upon Toulon; and a siege was begun which for three months made but little apparent progress.

Affairs within the city became unsettled, and were soon almost demoralized; and Pere Huot having fallen seriously ill, Margot's heart grew heavy, as Jean, seeming to throw off all restraint, wandered day after day about the streets, associating with soldiers and rough characters.

Margot had not dared to communicate much of her misgivings from the day, now several weeks past, when, after remonstrating warmly as to some offense he had committed, she bade him ask himself if his father would have approved the act, and started back, as from a man's threatened attack, when the boy turned fiercely upon her.

"Never name him to me again!" he cried, with heaving breast and flashing eyes. "I have no father. Do you know my name here in Toulon? It is the same as Pierre's. He is Pierre Lafitte, and I am his brother, Jean Lafitte. And, be I saint or devil, to the end of my life I am Jean Lafitte!"

He looked so big and terrible in his rage that Margot, silent and frightened, felt that he was almost a stranger to her—this boy she had carried in her arms, and whom she had loved and watched over for so many years.

It was the last night of November, when darkness fell early over the city, and Margot was preparing her lonely evening meal. Where Jean and Pierre were, she knew not, but presumed that, as was often their habit, they would sup with some of their soldier acquaintances.

Although the evening was cold, the usual number of pedestrians were abroad, these being mostly soldiers, who were seeking excitement and gossip at the various eating and drinking places frequented by them.

One of these was called "Le Chien Heureux," a two-story house situated down near one of the quays. Lights were blinking brightly from its small windows, and inside several stoves were burning, where Thiel, the landlord, and his one assistant, were preparing supper for several civilians and soldiers who sat about, talking and drinking, at the various small tables.

Sitting near the fire, two soldiers and a citizen, together with Jean and Pierre, were listening to a man in their midst, who, from his talk and appearance, seemed to have been an extensive traveler. This was Laro, an habitue of Le Chien Heureux when on shore from the "Aigle," a rakish-looking brigantine, of which he was owner and captain.

Jean listened with an attention which, for some reason, appeared to amuse Laro, who, now and then, with a quizzical smile lighting his black eyes, glanced askance at the boy's enraptured face.

Laro's story had been listened to by others seated around the tables, who occasionally reminded Thiel to hurry their suppers.

The next minute a soldierly-looking man came in, the uniform of a petty officer showing as he unclasped and threw off the heavy cloak that had enveloped him. After demanding supper as speedily as possible, he seated himself some distance away from the group at the fire.

But Pierre had been staring open-mouthed at him; and now the sound of his voice caused Jean to start, and turn his head quickly in the direction of the shadowy corner where the soldier was seated.

"Greloire!" he breathed.

"What is that, my cocksparrow? Toulon harbors many a stranger tongue, to be sure, but I speak only my own."

"And, be I saint or devil, to the end of my life I am Jean Lafitte!"

"Come, gentlemen, all," said Thiel, now bustling amongst them with a huge platter. "Your suppers are ready."

Neither Laro nor the others paid any further heed to the soldier, who, seated apart from them, ate his supper with an appetite that bore witness to previous fasting. But at odd moments, when unnoticed, his eyes, with a smiling warning in them, met those of the two boys; and once, while Jean was staring at him, he laid a finger upon his lips with a swift cautioning gesture of silence.

His supper finished, Jean strolled back to the fire, before which Greloire had seated himself, while the others remained at the tables, some still eating, and all of them discussing matters pertaining to the siege.

Leaning carelessly against the fireplace, after a quick glance about, to make sure he was not observed, the boy looked at the soldier with a world of inquiry in his dark eyes. Greloire replied with a comprehending smile, but again laid his finger against his lips, as if impressing silence, and then turned to the fire.

He had picked up his long cloak, and was putting it on. And no one noticed the suggestive motion of the head and hand, as, with slightly arched eyebrows, he looked once more toward Jean, who was still standing beside the fireplace. But the boy was quick to see these, and understood that he might expect to find Greloire outside.

Allowing what he felt to be a proper amount of time to pass after the latter had closed the door behind him, Jean put on his cap, and having motioned to Pierre, they both followed, regardless of Laro's declaration that it was earlier than usual, and not yet time for them to start for home.

The two boys, with occasional sharp glances around, passed along the almost deserted street. Presently Pierre, after a quick look over his shoulder, gripped Jean's arm.

"There is a man who looks like Greloire coming on just behind us."

He had scarcely spoken when a swift but cautious footfall came close behind him, and a hand caught his shoulder, while Greloire said in a carefully lowered voice, 'Tiens! My quick-witted comrade, how are you?"

"As you see, or might, were it not so dark," replied Jean, grasping the soldier's hand. "And you?"

"Much better for the fine supper I have been eating," said Greloire, a note of laughter in his voice.

Pierre now fell behind, and the three stepped more briskly.

"What have you to tell me?" inquired Jean, after they had gone a few paces, and Greloire remained silent.

"Did your lieutenant send you—was he wishing to know of me?" asked Jean eagerly. But there was no answer.

"Well, yes, and no," replied Greloire, speaking slowly, as if considering his words, and adding, as he looked down into the boy's upraised face, which even the dim light of the stars showed to be filled with keen disappointment, "Surely you have every reason to know his love for you; and he is one who never forgets. But his days are now filled with that which leaves little time for him to think of anything but this siege. He is outside the city, with the Revolutionary forces."

"He without, and you within, fighting against him!" burst from Jean's lips, as he drew himself away.

"Sh-h!" whispered the soldier. "These streets may seem deserted; but 'tis as well not to speak loud words for the winds may carry them to where the wrong ears may hear them."

Jean laughed softly, and came closer to Greloire.

"Aha—I see how it is."

"Be all the more careful, then, my young master," warned the soldier.

There was silence for a time, while the three walked slowly along until they reached a street where the houses were far apart; and the last one of all, from whose windows came a faint gleam of light, Jean pointed out to Greloire as his present abode.

"And so that is where you are living," said the soldier, as they stood looking toward it. "I tell you, lad, that had I the chance to possess so quiet a home, I should stop within it, and not be wandering into such shambles of carnage and blood as is the city now. Take my advice, and keep away from Le Chien Heureux. I can now come to your house; and that will be the best place for me to see you. But, if you are to undertake the mission of which I spoke, the less you see of that scoundrel Laro, the better will it be."

"Laro is my friend," declared Jean, his quick temper rising like a flash of fire. "He is my friend, and even you must not name him in such fashion to me."

"So?" said Greloire calmly, taking his hand from the boy's arm. "Then I doubt if you are to be trusted, and regret telling you as much as I have. Laro is not to be trusted. He is almost old enough to be your father; and, his suspicions once aroused, he has sufficient craftiness to surprise your secret, and use it for our harm."

Jean was silent, and Greloire went on in a milder tone. "Now tell me, were you in my place would you not think twice before risking secrets with such a keeper—one who cares so much for Laro as to have temper with an older friend, who, knowing the man's reputation, warns you against him?"

"I am not angry, Greloire," declared Jean penitently, "and regret that I was so. Pardon me."

"All right—all right, mon ami," was Greloire's hearty reply. Then, again lowering his voice, he asked in a half quizzical tone, "And do you wish to see our little colonel?"

"Yes—indeed yes! You know that I would not give one of his fingers in exchange for a dozen Laros."

"Bien," said Greloire. "Now I must be going. So adieu, and my compliments to the good dame Margot."

With this he turned about, and whistling softly, went back the way they had come, while the two boys, after watching him a few moments, bent their steps toward the cottage.

(To be continued.)

ILLS OF TELEPHONE GIRLS.

Customary Salutation Constantly Rings In Their Ears.

"When a central operator hears somebody crying 'Hello' to her on the street, nine times out of ten she ignores the greeting," said a telephone expert. "Why? Because she takes the salute to be a delusion.

"A girl who, day after day, hears 'Hello, hello,' dinned into her ears, and who is constantly responding with 'Hello, hello, hello,' in time grows to hear and repeat the word mechanically; and when she leaves her work that word is still ringing in her ears. She can hear people saying 'Hello' to her on all sides, but the greeting of the real thing is so confused with the ghosts of dead labor that she seldom notices the first salutation of a friend.

"And did you ever know, by the way, that nine out of ten persons who habitually use the telephone have what we call 'telephone ear'? In its first stage the telephone ear becomes acute and sensitive; but after long use the hearing becomes more or less blunted, and half the complaints against poor telephone service may be attributed rightly to the 'telephone ear.' Try it some time. If you habitually use the right ear, next time use the left and see if it isn't twice as satisfactory. It is a good plan for those who use the telephone much to frequently switch ears. This keeps the hearing equally balanced, and might ward off a permanent deafness."

Two Recommendations Needed.

Slowpay—Doctor, I suppose you can recommend your tailor to me?

Doctor—Certainly, but you will have to get some one else to recommend you to my tailor.